

Appendix B4: The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister research project; PPG3 and highway adoption

- [Section ODPM1: Introduction](#)
- [Section ODPM2: Project Summary](#)

Section ODPM1: Introduction

1.1 This Appendix provides a summary of the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM) project on the planning policy guidance document PPG3 and highway adoption.

1.2 Leicestershire played an active part in this project. They:

- Had meetings with one of the lead consultants;
- Supplied research material, including residents surveys (appendices B2 and B3);
- Attended a project workshop to give views on the current situation; and
- Were consulted on the draft project report and took part in the 'sounding board' meeting organised by the consultants to seek views on it.

1.3 The following section gives a brief summary of the project's purpose and findings.

Section ODPM2: Project Summary

1.4 The purpose of the project was to:

- Identify any problems over adopting new highways that meet the requirements of PPG3 housing;
- Identify the causes of any such problems; and
- Recommend how to deal with them.

1.5 The research involved, among other things, discussions, workshops and meetings with planning authorities, developers and other highway authorities.

1.6 The research confirmed that there are the following problems.

- Developers, highway authorities and planning authorities are approaching the problem with different motives.
- Highway authorities are having difficulties meeting the requirements of both PPG3, which is prompting narrower and more pedestrian friendly streets, and DB32 which is based largely around the needs of traffic.
- Documents such as 'Places, Streets and Movement' are not clear enough to base new approaches to street design on.
- PPG3 parking policies are difficult to interpret and there are concerns about the impact of its policies on minimising off-street parking.
- Separate planning and highway policy and legislation can present difficulties. Different views expressed by the highway authorities and planning authorities over the design of new streets is doing little to encourage developers to embrace new thinking.

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- Through the adoption process, the highway authority is in a strong position to set requirements for new roads, which planning authorities or developers may find hard to challenge.
- There is a lack of resources:
 - For planning and highway authorities to prepare design guidance and to respond to planning applications; and
 - To maintain new roads.

1.7 Proposals to tackle the problem include the following.

- The Government to publish a national 'Manual for Streets' based on sound research particularly in terms of the effect of layout, geometry and other factors on road safety (published by DfT 2007).
- The Government to issue further guidance to clarify the PPG3 parking policy and give guidance on applying it.
- A further criterion should be added to the assessment framework for the next round of Local Transport plans (LTPs) entitled 'Policies for a Better Public Realm' or similar. This is to assess whether LTP policies encourage better-quality highway and transportation infrastructure and more attractive public spaces.
- There should be more awareness raising and sharing of good practice, including through regional conferences organised by the ODPM.
- Planning and Highways development control needs better integration. This can be done by:
 - Placing an obligation on planning and highway authorities to work together to jointly prepare and approve key policies for the design of new roads; and
 - Requiring applicants to include all necessary information with their proposals to make sure that the highway authority's information needs are met at the planning application stage.
- The Government to publish clear national guidance about items and materials that can normally be adopted without payment of commuted sums. For items and materials where commuted sums are to be paid, there should be clear national rules on how they should be calculated, and the adopting authority's obligations to maintain the infrastructure to an agreed standard should be laid down.